

Inclusionary Housing Bylaw

Introduction

This model bylaw provides a menu of options to use in order to craft inclusionary zoning bylaws that respond directly to local housing demands and real estate financial conditions. The zoning structure begins as a mandatory inclusionary zoning provision, then offers a series of optional exemptions to affordable housing development that mitigate hardships associated with affordable housing development. Section 04.2 includes a variety of incentives that can be used spur affordable housing development and mitigate the costs borne by developers. Commentary below each provision details the development implications of each exemption and incentive. Municipalities should carefully consider the development consequences of each of these policy choices in order to assemble zoning bylaws that respond directly to local economies. However, note that previous studies, [http://www.mhp.net/housing_library/inclusionary_zoning.php], indicate that mandatory provisions combined with strong incentives are most effective in promoting affordable housing development.

01.0 Purpose and Intent: The purpose of this bylaw is to encourage development of new housing that is affordable to low and moderate-income households. At minimum, affordable housing produced through this regulation should be in compliance with the requirements set forth in G.L. c. 40B sect. 20-24 and other affordable housing programs developed by state, county and local government. It is intended that the affordable housing units that result from this bylaw/ordinance be considered as Local Initiative Units, in compliance with the requirements for the same as specified by the Department of Housing and Community Development. Definitions for affordable housing unit and eligible household can be found in the Definitions Section.

02.0 Applicability

1. In all zoning districts, the inclusionary zoning provisions of this section shall apply to the following uses:

- (a) Any project that results in a net increase of ten (10) or more dwelling units, whether by new construction or by the alteration, expansion, reconstruction, or change of existing residential or non-residential space; and

COMMENT: *The number of units required to trigger the applicability of the inclusionary zoning provisions should reflect local real estate development demands. In built-out communities, inclusionary zoning could apply to developments with fewer units. For example, Brookline's affordable housing requirements apply when six new residential units are proposed. Other Massachusetts communities, including Boston and Cambridge bylaws specify ten (10) as the threshold number of new units required to trigger the application inclusionary zoning bylaws. The Cape Cod Commission regulations specify 30 units, but encourage the member towns to specify a 10-unit minimum.*

- (b) Any subdivision of land for development of ten (10) or more dwelling units; and

COMMENT: *It is recommended that the Town adopt a companion regulation to prevent intentional segmentation of projects designed to avoid the requirements of this bylaw (e.g. subdividing one large tract into two smaller tracts, each of which will contain fewer than 10 units or phasing a development such that each phase will contain fewer than 10 units). This “anti-segmentation” bylaw can specify that parcels held in common ownership as of the passage of this bylaw cannot later defeat the requirements of this regulation by segmenting the development. Note that the division of land trigger is accomplished by either filing a plan for the subdivision of land or the filing of a so-called approval not required plan.*

(c) Any life care facility development that includes ten (10) or more assisted living units and accompanying services.

COMMENT: *It is recommended that the Town review zoning definitions for life care facilities to ensure coordination between sections.*

03.0 Special Permit: ~~04.0~~—The development of any project set forth in Section 02.0 (above) shall require the grant of a Special Permit from the Board of Appeals or other designated Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA). A Special Permit shall be granted if the proposal meets the requirements of this bylaw. The application procedure for the Special permit shall be as defined in Section ____ of the Town’s zoning bylaw.

04.0 Mandatory Provision of Affordable Units:

1. As a condition of approval for a Special Permit, the applicant shall contribute to the local stock of affordable unit in accordance with the following requirements:

(a) At least ten (10) percent of the units in a division of land or multiple unit development subject to this bylaw shall be established as affordable housing units in any one or combination of methods provided for below:

- (1) constructed or rehabilitated on the locus subject to the Special Permit (see Section 05.0); or
- (2) constructed or rehabilitated on a locus different than the one subject to the Special Permit (see Section 06.0); or
- (3) an equivalent fees-in-lieu of payment may be made (see Section 07.0); or
- (4) An applicant may offer, and the SPGA may accept, donations of land in fee simple, on or off-site, that the SPGA in its sole discretion determines are suitable for the construction of affordable housing units. The value of donated land shall be equal to or greater than the value of the construction or set-aside of the affordable units. The SPGA may require, prior to accepting land as satisfaction of the requirements of this bylaw/ordinance, that the applicant submit appraisals of the land in question, as well as other data relevant to the determination of equivalent value.

The applicant may offer, and the SPGA may accept, any combination of the Section 04.1(a)(1)-(4) requirements provided that in no event shall the total number of units or land area provided be less than the equivalent number or value of affordable units required by this bylaw/ordinance.

COMMENT: *This section establishes the minimum number of, and methods for, provision of affordable units. Note that the applicant has four choices for providing affordable units. First, they may construct or rehabilitate units on the site subject to the Special Permit. Second, they may construct or rehabilitate units at a different site than the one subject to the Special Permit. Third, they may offer fees-in-lieu of the construction of affordable housing units, more fully discussed in Section 07. Fourth, they may offer, and the SPGA may accept, land on- or off-site for the purposes of constructing affordable units, perhaps by the Town or a non-profit entity or a subsequent developer. Finally, the applicant may propose and the SPGA may accept any combination of options one through four.*

COMMENT: *This section is the location for including any voluntary provisions and density bonuses for affordable housing. The maximum number of bonus units must be specified, as well as the SPGA's method for determining the number of affordable units beyond those required that must be provided before qualifying for a bonus. Model language for incentives to promote more voluntary development of inclusionary housing follows.*

2. To facilitate the objectives of this Section 04.0, modifications to the dimensional requirements in any zoning district may be permitted for any project under these regulations, as the applicant may offer and the SPGA may accept, subject to the conditions below:

(a) FAR Bonus. The FAR normally permitted in the applicable zoning district for residential uses may be increased by up to thirty (30) percent for the inclusion of affordable units in accordance with Section 04.1 (above), and at least fifty (50) percent of the additional FAR should be allocated to the affordable units. In a mixed use development, the increased FAR may be applied to the entire lot, however any gross floor area increase resulting from increased FAR shall be occupied only by residential uses, exclusive of any hotel or motel use.

(b) Density Bonus. The minimum lot area per dwelling unit normally required in the applicable zoning district may be reduced by that amount necessary to permit up to two (2) additional units on the lot for each one affordable unit required in Section 04.1 (above).

(c) Voluntary Inclusionary Housing Bonus. New affordable housing development that is not subject to Section 02.0 and exceeds the requirements specified in Section 04.1(a) may receive the same benefits specified in Sections 04.2(a) and 04.2(b) when the development is approved by the SPGA.

05.0 Provisions Applicable to Affordable Housing Units On- and Off-Site:

1. Siting of affordable units. All affordable units constructed or rehabilitated under this bylaw shall be situated within the development so as not to be in less desirable locations than market-rate units in the development and shall, on average, be no less accessible to public amenities, such as open space, as the market-rate units.

2. Minimum design and construction standards for affordable units. Affordable housing units shall be integrated with the rest of the development and shall be compatible in design, appearance, construction, and quality of materials with other units. Interior features and mechanical systems of affordable units shall conform to the same specifications as apply to market-rate units.

COMMENT: The provisions above provide general guidelines meant to ensure that the affordable housing is well integrated with and visually indistinguishable from market rate housing. These goals can be strengthened by specifying site plan and building material standards.

3. Timing of construction or provision of affordable units or lots. Where feasible, affordable housing units shall be provided coincident to the development of market-rate units, but in no event shall the development of affordable units be delayed beyond the schedule noted below:

Market-rate Unit (% Complete)	Affordable Housing Unit (% Required)
<30%	-
30% plus 1 unit	10%
Up to 50%	30%
Up to 75%	50%
75% plus 1 unit	70%
Up to 90%	100%

Fractions of units shall not be counted.

COMMENT: The table above establishes the required schedule for completion of affordable units in conjunction with the completion of market rate units. For example, a 100-lot subdivision requires 10 affordable units. Assume all 10 affordable units are to be constructed on-site. Upon completion of the 31st market rate unit, the developer must construct at least 1 affordable unit (10% of 10). After completion of the 50th unit, the applicant must have constructed at least 3 affordable units (30% of 10), and so on. Towns are free to adjust this schedule, but should bear in mind that a minimum number of market rate units are often needed to create sufficient cash flow to make the overall project work. To that end, it is recommended that the initial affordable unit requirement not be triggered until at least one-third of the market units are constructed.

4. Marketing Plan for Affordable Units. Applicants under this bylaw/ordinance shall submit a marketing plan or other method approved by the Town through its local comprehensive plan, to the SPGA for its approval, which describes how the affordable units will be marketed to potential home buyers or tenants. This plan shall include a description of the lottery or other process to be used for selecting buyers or tenants.

***COMMENT:** A marketing plan is considered essential to the success of affordable housing development in many parts of Massachusetts. Issues of how the units are advertised, how qualified applicants are sought and determined, and methods for reducing delays for qualified applicants are key to the use of this bylaw/ordinance. As an option, the responsibilities under this provision could be transferred to a local housing partnership or authority.*

06.0 Provision of Affordable Housing Units Off-Site:

1. As an alternative to the requirements of Section 05.0, an applicant subject to the bylaw/ordinance may develop, construct or otherwise provide affordable units equivalent to those required by Section 04.0 off-site. All requirements of this bylaw/ordinance that apply to on-site provision of affordable units, shall apply to provision of off-site affordable units. In addition, the location of the off-site units to be provided shall be approved by the SPGA as an integral element of the Special Permit review and approval process.

***COMMENT:** Allowing off-site provision of affordable units gives flexibility to developers and allows municipalities to more carefully control the siting of new affordable housing development. Towns should add review criteria for the approval of off-site locations to ensure that new affordable housing development promotes the goal of creating mixed-income neighborhoods and encourages development or conversion of affordable units near areas with municipal services or access to public transportation may. Relegating the provision of the affordable units to undesirable portions of the community does little to promote the purposes of this bylaw/ordinance. Furthermore, towns and cities with more economically segregated neighborhoods should consider striking this provision from the bylaws to ensure that each new residential development built in any neighborhood contains some affordable housing.*

07.0 Fees-in-Lieu-of Affordable Housing Unit Provision:

1. As an alternative to the requirements of Section 05.0 or Section 06.0, an applicant may contribute to an established local housing trust fund to be used for the development of affordable housing in lieu of constructing and offering affordable units within the locus of the proposed development or at an off-site locus.

(a) Calculation of fee-in-lieu-of units. The applicant for development subject to this bylaw may pay fees-in-lieu of the construction of affordable units. For the purposes of this bylaw/ordinance the fee-in-lieu of the construction or provision of affordable units will be determined as a per-unit cost as calculated from regional construction and sales reports. The SPGA will make the final determination of acceptable value.

COMMENT: This Section provides a cash payment option in lieu of providing affordable units. The payment value may differ for each municipality and will depend on the size of the affordable housing unit discount that would be necessary to make the unit affordable (e.g. median sale price of market rate unit minus maximum sale price of a three-bedroom affordable dwelling unit). Fees-in-lieu will need to be recalculated regularly to account for inflation and other market changes. Furthermore, the local housing trust fund will need to be closely regulated to ensure that dollars contributed to the fund are spent exclusively on the provisioning of affordable housing. This is the appropriate section for specifying guidelines for administering the housing trust and stipulating the governance structure by which the trust will be managed.

Municipalities that significantly lack affordable housing opportunities should consider heavily restricting the fee-in-lieu payment option. In built-out communities, housing trust funds often grow and sit unused because sites appropriate for affordable housing development are not available. Additionally, affordable housing trusts can force municipal agents into the role of real estate developers, which local government officials may be poorly suited for or reluctant to do. Cities such as Cambridge have eliminated the fee-in-lieu payment option in almost all cases except for extreme hardship in order to ensure that affordable housing is built by the developers at the same time that new development is under construction.

(b) Schedule of fees-in-lieu-of-units payments. Fees-in-lieu-of-units payments shall be made according to the schedule set forth in Section 05.3, above.

COMMENT: This section establishes the fee-in-lieu of payments schedule to coincide with the schedule for provision of units established by Section 05.3. For example, a 50-lot subdivision requires five affordable units. An applicant choosing to make fee-in-lieu of payments would be required to pay \$5X (5 units @ \$X per unit). The payment schedule would require 10 percent of the \$5X after the 16th market rate unit was built, and \$100,000 after the 38th market rate unit was built and so on, according to the schedule noted in Section 05.3.

(c) Creation of Affordable Units. Cash contributions and donations of land and/or buildings made to the Town or its Housing Trust in accordance with Section 07.1 shall be used only for purposes of providing affordable housing for low or moderate income households. Using these contributions and donations, affordable housing may be provided through a variety of means, including but not limited to the provision of favorable financing terms, subsidized prices for purchase of sites, or affordable units within larger developments.

08.0 Maximum Incomes and Selling Prices: Initial Sale:

1. To ensure that only eligible households purchase affordable housing units, the purchaser of a affordable unit shall be required to submit copies of the last three years' federal and state income tax returns and certify, in writing and prior to transfer of title, to the developer of the housing units or his/her agent, and within thirty (30) days following transfer of title, to the local housing trust, community development corporation, housing authority or other agency as established by the Town, that his/her or their family's annual income level does not exceed the maximum level as established by the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development, and as may be revised from time to time.

2. The maximum housing cost for affordable units created under this bylaw is as established by the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development, Local Initiative Program or as revised by the Town.

COMMENT: *The Department of Housing and Community Development publishes maximum income, selling prices and monthly rent ceilings for occupants of affordable income housing units (Department of Housing and Community Development, Local Initiative Program, July 1996). Individual towns are free to adjust these numbers to accommodate local needs and concerns; however, it is recommended that the Department's guidelines be reviewed prior to setting local ceilings. These provisions may be more appropriately handled by the local housing partnerships rather than the developer.*

09.0 Preservation of Affordability; Restrictions on Resale:

1. Each affordable unit created in accordance with this bylaw shall have limitations governing its resale. The purpose of these limitations is to preserve the long-term affordability of the unit and to ensure its continued availability for affordable income households. The resale controls shall be established through a restriction on the property and shall be in force in perpetuity.

(a). Resale price. Sales beyond the initial sale to a qualified affordable income purchaser shall include the initial discount rate between the sale price and the unit's appraised value at the time of resale. This percentage shall be recorded as part of the restriction on the property noted in Section 9.1, above.

COMMENT: *For example, if a unit appraised for \$100,000 is sold for \$75,000 as a result of this bylaw, it has sold for 75 percent of its appraised value. If the appraised value of the unit at the time of proposed resale is \$150,000, the unit may be sold for no more than \$112,500--75 percent of the appraised value of \$150,000.*

(b) Right of first refusal to purchase. The purchaser of an affordable housing unit developed as a result of this bylaw shall agree to execute a deed rider prepared by the Town, consistent with model riders prepared by Department of Housing and Community Development, granting, among other things, the municipality's right of first refusal to purchase the property in the event that a subsequent qualified purchaser cannot be located.

(c) The SPGA shall require, as a condition for Special Permit under this bylaw, that the applicant comply with the mandatory set-asides and accompanying restrictions on affordability, including the execution of the deed rider noted in Section 10.1(b), above. The Building Commissioner/Inspector shall not issue an occupancy permit for any affordable unit until the deed restriction is recorded.

COMMENT: *This Section provides language to ensure that the affordable housing units remain affordable by restricting re-sales in perpetuity and by granting the Town a right of first refusal to purchase the dwelling unit should a qualified purchaser, beyond the initial purchaser, not be found. The restrictions on resale are designed to encourage the homeowner to maintain and improve the property while at the same time ensure that if and when sold, the new qualified buyer is able to enjoy the same discount between sale price and appraised value. It is important to emphasize that*

the restrictions on resale do not block, in any way, the property owner from realizing a profit on the resale of the dwelling unit. Rather, as noted, the resale restriction passes on the initial discounted rate enjoyed by the initial buyer to the new, qualified buyer.

10.0 Conflict with Other Bylaws/Ordinances: The provisions of this bylaw/ordinance shall be considered supplemental of existing zoning bylaws/ordinances. To the extent that a conflict exists between this bylaw/ordinance and others, the more restrictive bylaw/ordinance, or provisions therein, shall apply.

COMMENT: *This provision establishes that where a conflict exists between this bylaw/ordinance and an existing (or future) bylaw/ordinance, the more restrictive provisions of either would apply. For example, this bylaw/ordinance requires a Special Permit for the division of land into ten or more lots, whereas that requirement may not currently exist in existing town bylaws/ordinances. Section 10.0 states that the more restrictive provision applies during a conflict, thus the Special Permit requirements of this bylaw/ordinance would supersede (overrule) the provisions of existing bylaws/ordinances.*

11.0 Severability: If any provision of this bylaw is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of the bylaw shall not be affected thereby. The invalidity of any section or sections or parts of any section or sections of this bylaw shall not affect the validity of the remainder of the [town]'s zoning bylaw.

COMMENT: *This Section is a generic severability clause. Severability clauses are intended to allow a court to strike or delete portions of a regulation that it determines to violate state or federal law. In addition, the severability clause provides limited insurance that a court will not strike down the entire bylaw should it find one or two offending sections.*